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ABSTRACT

A study, involving two independent surveys and a transcript analysis, was conducted to determine the background characteristics, attitudes, and needs of students enrolled in police science programs at Moraine Valley Community College (MVCC). The first survey, which focused on personal characteristics and course enrollment data, was distributed in all police science courses in the early part of the spring 1983 term. Surveys were completed by 76% of the criminal justice (CRJ) students (N=200); 72% of the security and loss prevention (SLP) students (N=18); and at least 44% of the other police science students (N=177). The second survey was conducted in the middle of the term, focusing on employment history and needs, attitudes towards courses, and student characterizations of the program. Response rates were 54% for the CRJ students, 44% for the SLP students, and 15% for the other police science students. Study findings, based on the two surveys and an analysis of the transcripts of the first group of survey respondents, included the following: (1) 94% of the respondents were caucasian and 71% were male; (2) 77% did not have anyone in their immediate family employed in a police science related job, and the same percentage had themselves never held such a position; (3) 53% of the female respondents and 28% of the male respondents indicated that their career objectives had changed as a result of taking the police science courses. (HB)

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Moraine Valley Community College

RESEARCH NOTE
Office of Institutional Research

Date: August 1983

Re: Police Science Program Survey

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JC 840 238

Moraine Valley Community College

RESEARCH NOTE
Office of Institutional Research

Date: August 1983

Re: Police Science Program Survey

To determine the background characteristics, attitudes, and needs of persons enrolled in police science (POS) programs at Moraine Valley, two independent surveys and a transcript analysis were conducted on students taking courses in this area.

The first survey, which was conducted in the early part of the Spring 1983 semester, focused on bibliographic and background information related to personal characteristics and course enrollment data. Questionnaires were distributed in all POS courses and were aimed at three identifiable groups. Those persons enrolled in either Criminal Justice (CRJ--curriculum code 1260) or Security and Loss Prevention (SLP--curriculum code 1278) as a specific program intent comprised two of the groups with a third group being formed by all other students taking POS courses either as a special interest or elective. Valid questionnaires were returned by 200 of 263 persons in CRJ (response rate 76%) and 18 of 25 persons in SLP (response rate 72%). The absolute response rate for other POS enrolled students was not determinable; however, out of a duplicate headcount of 408 other POS students enrolled in Spring 1983, the return of 177 valid surveys gave an estimated minimum response rate of 44%.

A second survey was performed during the middle of the Spring 1983 term. Although some background information was included, this questionnaire dealt more directly with employment history and needs, attitudes toward courses, and student characterization of the POS program. The survey was conducted in all POS classes and, as did the first survey, included students from other major areas of study. Valid questionnaires were returned by 142 of 263 persons in CRJ (response rate 54%) and 11 of 25 persons in SLP (response rate 44%). Again, the absolute response rate for other POS students was not directly obtainable; however, using the duplicate headcount of 408, the return of 63 valid surveys yielded a minimum response rate of 15%.

To obtain information concerning course-size enrollments, grade point averages, percent "X" and "W" grades, and corroborating statistical data, a transcript analysis was performed on all students responding to the first survey. Since the second survey was conducted on essentially the same population, a transcript analysis on these individuals was not performed.

A qualifying note to this report is now stated. The reader is strongly advised to keep it in mind in the discussion which follows since reference may or may not be made to it on a continuing basis. Although good response rates were obtained from the SLP respondents to the surveys and transcript analysis, the sample sizes are uniformly small. Thus, inference from the results obtained from SLP students must be done with caution; specifically, trends should be interpreted as items for future study and analysis.

Composite Picture of POS Enrolled Students as a Function of Curriculum Area

The results of the two surveys and transcript analysis showed several common threads of both similarity and distinction between the three groups surveyed as a function of the program area in which students were enrolled.

The typical POS program enrollee at Moraine Valley shares the following similarities in characteristics:

- Resident of the MVCC District 524 (97%).
- Male (71%) with the third group of other POS students tending toward a slightly lower percentage (62%) of males.
- Caucasian (94%) with the remainder Black in origin.
- Non-veteran on a combination of federal and state benefits.
- Did not transfer credits into MVCC (70%). Of those who did, the leading areas were social science (8.1 cr. hr.), general studies (6.8 cr. hr.), science and mathematics (6.6 cr. hr.), and humanities (4.6 cr. hr.).
- Do not have anyone in their immediate family employed in POS related jobs (77%), but those who did indicated law enforcement (78%) and courts/law (10%) as the primary employment areas of family members.
- Have never held a paid full-time or part-time POS related job (77%) with the third groups of other POS students tending toward a slightly higher percentage (83%).
- Do not currently hold a paid full-time or part-time POS related job (82%), but those who did indicated law enforcement and private security (74%) as the primary employment areas.
- Have not found their career objectives changed due to POS courses (65%).
- Showed no interest as a function of program area in having Saturday classes (71%) or Sunday classes (82%).
- Agreed that the ease of POS coursework (97%) and peer persuasion (99%) were not factors in their enrolling at Moraine Valley.
- CRJ (97%) and SLP (100%) students felt that they would be successful in obtaining the criminal justice job of their choice.
- CRJ students (69%) and SLP students (50%) thought POS courses would be very helpful in helping them achieve their employment objectives. CRJ (30%) and SLP (50%) considered these courses to be somewhat helpful, and less than 1% of both groups considered courses to be not very helpful.

As a function of program area, the typical POS student shared the following differences in characteristics:

- Whereas CRJ and SLP students were predominantly part-time (55%), only 36% of the other POS enrollees were part-timers.

- CRJ and SLP students tended to be enrolled in less credit hours (9.2) and courses (3.1) than other POS enrollees (11.6 cr. hr. and 4.0 courses).

- CRJ and SLP students had a slightly higher mean GPA (2.89) compared to other POS students (2.58).

- Students enrolled in SLP tended to have a higher mean age (32) than both CRJ (24) and other POS students (22).

- SLP students had been out of high school longer on the average (14 years) compared to both CRJ (5 years) and other POS students (4 years).

- CRJ and SLP students were more likely to be seeking degree certification at MVCC (95%) than other POS students (73%).

- CRJ and SLP students had more difficulty in scheduling POS courses (32%) than other POS students (11%).

- CRJ and SLP students felt that career preparation and job relatedness best described their reasons for enrolling in POS coursework, whereas other POS students listed the interesting nature of the courses as their main reason.

- When asked to rank the valuability of various POS courses in terms of career objectives, it was significant that CRJ and SLP students considered Criminal Law I and Criminal Law II to be more valuable in this regard than did other POS students.

As mentioned previously, the above analysis was carried out solely as a function of the program area in which students were enrolled. The results are useful in that they give a general typology of student characteristics. In several cases, however, characteristics measured in the second survey were found to depend on one or more underlying variables; for example, variations in characteristics with full or part-time status, sex, or age. The affected characteristics are examined in more detail below. Item numbers are as they appear on the second survey form. Items not listed showed no variation with full or part-time status, sex, or age.

Variations in Response With Full or Part-Time Status, Sex, and Age

Item 1--Full or Part-Time Status

Of all students surveyed, the mean age of part-timers (26) was significantly greater than that of full-timers (21).

Item 6--Transfer of Credits to MVCC

It was significant that a higher percentage of males (36%) than females (20%) either have or plan to transfer credits to MVCC.

Item 7--Completion of Degree at MVCC

Of those surveyed, the mean age of those seeking to complete a degree at MVCC (23) was significantly less than those not seeking a degree (26). Full-timers seeking a degree (94%) was significantly greater than part-timers seeking a degree (80%).

Item 10--Past Employment in POS Related Job

The mean age of all students surveyed who have held a POS related job (28) was significantly greater than those who have not held a job in this field (22). Part-timers (39%) were more apt to have held such a job than full-timers (12%).

Item 11--Current Employment in POS Related Job

Of all students surveyed, the mean age of those currently holding POS related jobs (27) was significantly greater than those not currently employed in this area (22). Part-timers (31%) were more likely to be currently employed than full-timers (9%).

Item 13--Difficulty in Scheduling POS Courses

Females who had difficulty in scheduling POS courses (35%) were significantly greater than males (20%).

Item 14--Interest in Saturday POS Classes

Of those who indicated an interest in Saturday classes, the mean age of those expressing this interest (25) was significantly greater than those who did not (22).

Item 15--Interest in Sunday POS Classes

Sunday classes were preferred by females (27%) significantly over males (12%).

Item 19--Changed Career Objectives as a Result of POS Courses

It was significant that females (53%) over males (28%) indicated that their career objectives had changed as a result of taking POS courses.

The last item on the second survey, Item 20, asked CRJ and SLP students to rate each of 17 courses on a scale from 1 (not at all valuable) to 10 (very valuable) in regard to the valuability of these courses as related to their career objectives. Significant ratings differences were found in several courses with respect to full or part-time status, sex, and age and are discussed below. The composite results are shown in Table 1. As noted previously, it was also found to be significant that CRJ and SLP students considered Criminal Law I and II to be more valuable to their career objectives than did other POS students. See Table 1.

Item 20--Part b--Principles of Security and Loss Prevention

Students in the age bracket over 30 rated this item as more valuable (8.3) than did students in the under 30 category (6.5).

Item 20--Part e--Introduction to Corrections

It was significant that females rated this item as more valuable (7.5) compared to males (6.3).

Item 20--Part g--Traffic Control

Males rated this item as significantly more valuable (6.9) compared to females (5.9).

Table 1*

Composite Course Evaluation Results for CRJ and SLP Students

Spring 1983

Course Title	N**	Mean Rating***
Criminal Law I	154	8.87
Criminal Law II	145	8.86
Investigation and Criminal Evidence	148	8.57
Vice and Drug Abuse Control	144	8.31
Introduction to Law Enforcement	169	8.12
Criminology	158	8.12
Police Operations and Administration	142	8.08
Stress and the Police Officer	138	7.67
Juvenile Delinquency and Procedures	147	7.54
Security Procedures	139	6.96
Security Administration	141	6.84
Principles of Security and Loss Prevention	143	6.72
Traffic Control	139	6.66
Introduction to Corrections	135	6.65
Retail and Commercial Security	132	6.31
Industrial Security	134	6.22
Hospital Security	132	6.16

* In descending order of mean rating.
** Number of valid responses from CRJ and SLP students.
*** On scale of 1 (not at all valuable) to 10 (very valuable). The weighted average mean rating for all items is 7.49.

Item 20--Part h--Security Administration

CRJ and SLP students in the over 30 age bracket rated this item as more valuable (8.5) than did students in the under 30 age group (6.6).

Item 20--Part l--Hospital Security

Students in the over 30 age group rated this item significantly more valuable (7.9) than students in the under 30 age group (6.0).

Transcript Analysis for Percent "X" and "W" Grades in POS Courses

A transcript analysis was carried out to determine the composite percentage of percent "X" plus "W" grades for the 736 CRJ and 25 SLP students enrolled in POS courses from Summer 1980 thru Spring 1983. The results are displayed in Table 2. See Table 2.

The weighted average percent "X" plus "W" grades for the 17 courses listed is 14.5%. The coursee with above average "X" plus "W" percentage were: Retail and Commercial Security (37.5%), Introduction to Law Enforcement (20.4%), Juvenile Delinquency Procedures (18.0%), Traffic Control (18.0%), Vice and Drug Abuse Control (16.4%), and Criminology (15.8%).

Transcript Analysis for Percent "X" and "W" Grades in Non-POS Courses

To determine the composite percentage of "X" plus "W" grades for students enrolled in non-POS courses, a transcript analysis for the period Summer 1980 thru Spring 1983 was conducted. The results for SLP students are shown in Table 3 for courses in which total enrollment during this period was five or above. See Table 3.

It is particularly noteworthy that the top two courses in "X" plus "W" percentage were mathematics related: Intermediate Algebra (66.6%) and Fundamentals of Mathematics (40.0%).

The results for CRJ students are shown in Table 4 for courses in which enrollment during the Summer 1980 thru Spring 1983 period was 20 or above. See Table 4.

Three courses had "X" plus "W" percentages above 40%: Introduction to Accounting (60.4%), Spanish I (55.5%), and Intermediate Algebra (45.9%).

Comparing the SLP and CRJ tables show that high percentage "X" plus "W" courses for SLP students were also high percentage "X" plus "W" courses for CRJ students: Intermediate Algebra (SLP 66.6%, CRJ 45.9%), Fundamentals of Mathematics (SLP 40.0%, CRJ 31.1%), Introduction to Psychology (SLP 37.5%, CRJ 31.0%), Typing I (SLP 20.0%, CRJ 28.9%), and Composition I (SLP 16.6%, CRJ 34.0%).

Table 2*

Composite Comparison of Percent X Plus W

Grades For CRJ and SLP

Summer 1980 Thru Spring 1983

Course Number	Course Title	Criminal Justice			Security & Loss Prevention		
		% (X+W)	Mean GPA**	Total Enrolled***	% (X+W)	Mean GPA**	Total Enrolled***
POS 113	Retail and Commercial Security	37.5	3.250	8	No Enrollment		
POS 101	Introduction to Law Enforcement	20.4	2.992	357	0.0	3.142	7
POS 107	Juvenile Delinquency and Procedures	18.0	3.267	143	14.2	3.333	7
POS 108	Traffic Control	18.0	3.367	83	0.0	3.000	2
POS 205	Vice & Drug Abuse Control	16.4	3.156	139	12.5	3.571	8
POS 105	Criminology	15.8	3.033	220	14.2	3.166	7
POS 202	Criminal Law II	14.1	2.927	113	25.0	3.000	4
POS 103	Police Operations	13.6	3.283	87	0.0	3.750	4
POS 104	Investigation & Criminal Evidence	11.5	3.309	164	0.0	3.571	7
POS 201	Criminal Law I	11.5	3.167	207	0.0	3.444	9
POS 111	Stress & the Police Officer	11.0	3.282	45	0.0	3.500	3
POS 110	Security Administration	10.8	3.349	73	9.0	3.500	11
POS 203	Police Operations & Administration	9.3	3.151	96	No Enrollment		
POS 109	Security Procedures	9.0	3.550	22	0.0	3.666	3
POS 102	Principles of Security & Loss Prevention	6.4	3.505	92	0.0	3.083	12
POS 112	Industrial Security	0.0	3.565	24	0.0	3.750	4
POS 115	Security Procedures	0.0	3.450	20	0.0	4.000	3

* In descending order of % (X+W) grades for CRJ students. Similar figures for SLP are shown alongside for purpose of comparison.

** Mean GPA Summer 1980 thru Spring 1983 for CRJ in POS courses = 3.179.
Mean GPA Summer 1980 thru Spring 1983 for SLP in POS courses = 3.396.

*** Reflects duplicate headcount enrollment.

Table 3*

Percent X Plus W Grades

for SLP Students in Non-POS Courses

Summer 1980 Thru Spring 1983

Course Number	Course Title	% (X+W)	Mean GPA	Total Enrolled**
MTH 114	Intermediate Algebra	66.6	2.000	6
MTH 110	Fundamentals of Mathematics	40.0	2.000	5
PSY 101	Introduction to Psychology	37.5	3.000	8
OFC 101	Typing I	20.0	3.000	5
COM 101	Composition I	16.6	2.750	6

* In descending order of % (X+W) for SLP students in non-POS courses with enrollments of five or above from Summer 1980 thru Spring 1983.

** Reflects duplicate headcount enrollment.

Table 4*

Percent X Plus W Grades for CRJ Students in Non-POS Courses

Summer 1980 Thru Spring 1983

Course Number	Course Title	% (X+W)	Mean GPA	Total Enrolled**
BUS 142	Introduction to Accounting	60.4	2.000	43
SPA 101	Spanish I	55.5	2.583	27
MTH 114	Intermediate Algebra	45.9	2.384	74
PSC 115	State & Local Government	37.5	2.468	77
PSC 110	American National Government	37.2	2.210	91
BIO 111	General Biology	36.6	2.241	48
PHI 101	Introduction to Philosophy	36.0	2.392	50
DPR 101	Introduction to Data Processing	35.7	2.739	36
BUS 120	Business Mathematics	35.1	2.942	54
COM 101	Composition I	34.0	2.547	211

Table 4* (Continued)

Course Number	Course Title	% (X+W)	Mean GPA	Total Enrolled**
MTH 110	Fundamentals of Mathematics	31.1	2.469	96
PSY 101	Introduction to Psychology	31.0	2.545	264
PSY 201	Human Relations in Organizations	30.0	2.571	20
COM 111	Technical Communications I	29.0	2.828	100
OFC 101	Typing I	28.9	3.064	38
COM 103	Speech Fundamentals	27.7	2.961	36
COM 102	Composition II	26.2	2.470	95
MTH 111	Communicating Through Mathematics	24.0	2.684	25
MTH 118	Elementary Statistics	23.7	2.562	21
BUS 136	Business Law	18.9	2.400	37

* In descending order of % (X+W) grades for CRJ students in non-POS courses with enrollments of 20 or above from Summer 1980 thru Spring 1983.

** Reflects duplicate headcount enrollment.

Transcript Analysis for High Enrollment Curriculum Areas by POS Students

From the first survey conducted in the Spring 1983, it was possible to determine those curriculum areas which received sizeable enrollments from CRJ and SLP students. The results for CRJ and SLP students are shown in Table 5 for curriculum areas with more than ten CRJ enrollees and three SLP enrollees.

The small enrollment figures for SLP students reflect that only 19 students were enrolled in the SLP curriculum during the Spring 1983 semester as compared to the 236 CRJ students covering this same period.

Excluding POS courses, high enrollment areas for CRJ students were: COM (141), PSY (108), SOC (102), PSC (81), and MTH (64). For SLP students, the preferred curricular areas were PSY (9) and COM (9). The numbers in parentheses reflect a duplicated headcount enrollment for the Spring 1983 semester.

Table 5

High Enrollment Curriculum Areas for CRJ and SLP Students

Spring 1983

Curriculum Area	CRJ Enrollment	SLP Enrollment	Curriculum Area	CRJ Enrollment	SLP Enrollment
POS	1,128	102	PEH	27	3
COM	141	9	BUS	24	3
PSY	108	9	DPR	15	
SOC	102	3	OFC	15	
PSC	81		BIO	13	
MTH	64		LIT	13	
NAT	53		HIS	11	
HUM	36	3	PHS	10	

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